

Message Text

SECRET

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3514
INFO USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: MILI ESTC IT
SUBJECT: NDPC SECURITY SURVEY OF ITALY

REF: STATE 145962

SUMMARY: IN VIEW OF THIS MISSION, CONCLUSIONS OF NDPC SURVEY OF ITALY ARE NOT WARRANTED. IF ADOPTED, SURVEY'S RECOMMENDATION TO DOWNGRADE LEVEL OF RELEASABLE U.S. CLASSIFIED MILITARY INFORMATION TO ITALY TO "CONFIDENTIAL" WOULD HAVE A WIDE-RANGING AND DAMAGING IMPACT ON THE RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES WITH A MAJOR ALLY AND ON ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO. THE REPERCUSSIONS OF SUCH A DECISION REQUIRE CONSIDERATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND SHOULD NOT BE MEASURED UPON WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY A SUPERFICIAL EXAMINATION OF CONDITIONS IN ITALY. THE QUALITY OF THE SURVEY IS MARRED BY NUMEROUS MISQUOTES, INTERPOLATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS. MISSION RECOMMENDS NO CHANGE IN LEVEL OF CLASSIFIED DISCLOSURE AND SUGGEST THAT TO EXTENT THERE MAY BE SOME RESERVATION ABOUT ABILITY OF GOI TO PROTECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION (AIM-9-L) SUSPECTED DEFICIENCIES IN THE ITALIAN SECURITY SYSTEM SHOULD BE ADDRESSED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS DIRECTLY WITH THE GOI AND THE FIRMS TO WHICH SUCH INFORMATION WOULD BE PASSED. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE APRIL 1978 NDPC SECURITY SURVEY CONCLUDES THAT "...AS A MATTER OF POLICY IT IS AN UNACCEPTABLE RISK TO CONTINUE TO RELEASE INFORMATION, COMPROMISE OF WHICH COULD CAUSE SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT." THE SURVEY RECOMMENDS THAT THE NDPC REVIEW ITS DISCLOSURE POLICY " WITH A VIEW TO DOWNGRADING ALL THE LEVELS TO CONFIDENTIAL,"

ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOTE THAT POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS MAY REQUIRE EXCEPTIONS TO SUCH A POLICY." THE PREMISES SUPPORTING THAT CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION ARE TWO: THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) IS LARGE, POWERFUL AND PARTICIPATES IN LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND ITALIAN SECURITY SERVICES ARE IN A " SERIOUS CONDITION OF CONFUSION." MISSION OBJECT TO NITHER PREMISE BUT FINDS BOTH INSUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT THE CONCLUSION.

2. IT IS NO SECRET THAT ITALY HAS (AND HAS HAD FOR SOME TIME) A LARGE COMMUNIST PARTY AND A STILL LARGER SEGMENT OF THE ELECTORATE IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. WHAT IT MEANS ON TERMS OF SYMPATHY FOR AND BROAD ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE SOVIET UNION IS SOMETHING ELSE. CERTAINLY THERE IS A LARGE QUESTION AS TO HOW MUCH OF THE PCI MEMBERSHIP IS IDEOLOGICALLY COMMITTED... WE THINK THERE ARE A GOOD MANY "RICE COMMUNIST" IN ITALY WHOSE MEMBERSHIP IN--AND ATTACHMENT TO THE PARTY DERIVES FROM LOCAL PATTERNS OF PATRONAGE. AND IT IS A TRUISM THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE ELECTORAL SUPPORT FOR THE PCI IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO FRUSTRATION WITH A POLITICAL SYSTEM THAT OFFERS NO DEMOCRATIC/ ALTERNATIVE TO A RULING PARTY LONG IN POWER AND LONG ACCUSED OF CORRUPTION. NONETHELESS THE HEAVY INFLUENCE OF A LARGE COMMUNIST PARTY DOES ON THE SURFACE SUGGEST AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH OPPORTUNITIES FOR WARSAW PACT ESPIONAGE DIRECTED AGAINST THE U.S. AND NATO
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APPEAR GREATER THAN WOULD OTHERWISE BE THE CASE. WE DOUBT HOWEVER THAT IN THE ITALIAN CONTEXT THERE IS A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN THE SIZE OF THE RISK AND THE NUMBER OF PCI MEMBERS OR THE PCI'S PERCENTAGE OF THE NATIONAL VOTE. IN ANY EVENT AT THE PRESENT TIME WE ARE PERSUADED THAT THE RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM AND DESPITE ALL THE IMPEDIMENTS (RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION, THE REORGANIZATION OF THE SECURITY SYSTEM A LOUDER VOICE FROM THE LEFT) CAN CONTINUE TO CONTROL ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED MATERIAL IN A MANNER THAT MEETS OUR REQUIREMENTS.

3. ITALY IS A KEY U.S. ALLY. THE PRESIDENT HAS SO ASSURED PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI. NUMEROUS U.S. CABINET OFFICERS HAVE SO ASSURED THEIR ITALIAN COUNTERPARTS. THE AMBASSADOR HAS FREQUENTLY SO ASSURED ITALIANS BOTH OFFICIAL AND OTHERWISE. THE SURVEYS RECOMMENDATION, IF FOLLOWED WOULD CAUSE THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AT ITS HIGHEST LEVELS TO QUESTION THE SINCERITY OF THOSE ASSURANCES. IT IS MOREOVER THE POLICY OF THE USG FORMED AT ITS HIGHEST LEVELS TO ASSIST ITALY IN DEALING WITH ITS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. ITALY'S PARTICIPATION IN A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT NATO AND BILATERAL PROGRAMS OF ARMAMENT PRODUCTION AND

DEVELOPMENT FOR WHICH AMERICAN TECHNOLOGICAL INFORMATION IS CRITICAL, IS POLITICALLY AS WELL ECONOMICALLY. AND WOULD BE SEVERELY CURTAILED IF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SURVEY WERE ADOPTED. ITALY IS CHAIRMAN OF THE IEPG FROM WHICH FLOWS THE TRANSATLANTIC DIALOGUE TO WHICH WE AND THE ALLIANCE ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE. THE IMPACT UPON THAT DIALOGUE OF PLACING ITALY IN A SECOND CLASS STATUS OF CONFIDENCE (AS WELL AS THE IMPACT UPON THE LTDP, AWACS, ETC), WOULD CERTAINLY BE CONTRARY TO OUR INTERESTS.

4. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CONTRADICTORY OBSERVATIONS AND INACCURACIES IN THE REPORT ITSELF WHICH LEAD TO UNFORTUNATE DISTORTIONS. THE SURVEY'S CONCLUSION IS NOT CONGRUENT FOR EXAMPLE, WITH THE STATEMENT IN PARA 5 OF ITS

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FINDINGS THAT NO DEFICIENCIES IN THE PHYSICAL AND DOCUMENT CONTROL ASPECTS OF SECURITY EITHER IN INDUSTRY OR GOVERNMENT WERE FOUND. NO EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED THAT CLASSIFIED U.S. MILITARY INFORMATION IN ITALIAN POSSESSION HAS BEEN PASSED TO THE WARSAW PACT. (THE SAME CAN HARDLY BE SAID

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OF OTHER IMPORTANT ALLIED THAT MAY BE BLESSED WITH SMALLER COMMUNIST PARTIES.) ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT ARGUE THAT ITALIAN SECURITY IS WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE (PARTICULARLY NOW WITH THE SECURITY SERVICES UNDERGOING THE

TRAMUAS OF REORGANIZATION), WE DO BELIEVE THAT, WHATEVER ITS FAULTS, IT SEEMS ADEQUATELY IN PRACTICE.

5. WE FIND ALSO PARTICULARLY DISTURBING EVIDENCE IN THE REPORT THAT MISSION BRIEFERS WERE APPARENTLY NOT CLEARLY HEARD. A FEW EXAMPLES:

A. PART II, PARA 1. "THE MAJOR CITIES...ARE PRES-
ENTLY UNDER COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS CONTROL IS THAT SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS ARE BEING FURNISHED AND WRITTEN BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THESE CITIES." THE SECOND STATEMENT IS IN ERROR. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY DOES NOT WRITE OR FURNISH TEXTBOOKS TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. EMBASSY BRIEFERS IN FACT STATED THAT MANY TEXTBOOKS BEING USED IN THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS ARE MARXIST IN ORIENTATION. THIS IS THE RESULT OF THE HEAVILY MARXIST PERSUASION OF THE ITALIAN INTELLIGENCE FROM AMONG WHOM TEXTBOOK AUTHORS TEND TO COME.

B. PART III, PARA 1. THE AUTHORS STATE THAT "THE PCI PLAYS AN EXTREMELY POWERFUL ROLE IN ITALY". (WE WOULD
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AGREE GENERALLY WITH THAT STATEMENT). THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE, THEY ADD, THAT "THIS SITUATION WILL CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY." IN FACT THE RESULTS OF RECENT ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS SUGGEST THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE. ITALIAN VOTING PATTERNS ARE NOT IMMUTABLE.

C. PART IV. MR. DOMINICK PERRONE (P.5) DID NOT SAY THAT BOTH SISMI AND SISDE WANT TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN COUNTERINTELLIGENCE BUT THAT SISMI HAD WANTED TO RETAIN AS MUCH OF THE SID COUNTER-TERRORISM SECTION AS IT COULD. NOR DID HE SAY THAT CHANGING OUR DISCLOSURE POLICY WOULD DESTROY THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. HE DID SAY IT WOULD DESTROY THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ITALIAN SECURITY SERVICES.

D. PART IV (PAGE 8). MR SILVA COUNSELOR FOR MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS, DID NOT SAY THAT THERE WAS ONE PCI MEMBER IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE SAID HE WAS AWARE OF ONE INSTANCE OF A PCI MEMBER'S HAVING HELD A POSITION IN AN OFFICE (WHICH HE HAS LEFT) DEALING WITH SENSITIVE MATERIAL, BUT THAT HE HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT PCI MEMBER DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS. THE ENTIRE SECTION OF THE REPORT DEALING WITH THE MEETING WITH MISSION PERSONNEL (PPS. 8-18) CONTAINS

"THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PCI" BUT THE OFFICIAL PARTY LINE WAS SAID TO HAVE FOLLOWED THE MOSCOW LINE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ISSUES...XI. D'AMBROSIO DID NOT REFER TO "ABUSES" BY SECURITY PEOPLE BUT RATHER TO PERCEIVED IRREGULARITIES IN THEIR OPERATIONS...ETC.

D. THE FINDINGS ATTRIBUTE TO EMBASSY OFFICIALS THE VIEW THAT "ACCESS TO US CLASSIFIED INFORMATION BY PCI MEMBERS OR VOTERS
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IS AN ACCEPTABLE RISK TO US SECURITY" BECAUSE THE PCI'S NOT A PART OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM." THIS IS NOT AN ACCURATE STATEMENT. INSTEAD WE WOULD SAY THAT THE ITALIAN SECURITY SYSTEM HAS, IN PRACTICE, WORKED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO EXCLUDE PCI ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND TO PROVIDE A LEVEL OF SECURITY THAT MEETS OUR REQUIREMENTS.

6. THE FOREGOING IS ILLUSTRATIVE, NOT BY ANY MEANS EXHAUSTIVE. THE REPORT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE ACCURATE AND SIMPLE MATTERS SUCH AS NAMES, TITLES AND ORGANIZATIONS MORE PRECISE, HAD THE TEAM CHECKED THEIR NOTES AND RECOLLECTIONS WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE MISSION WHO MET WITH THEM.

7. FURTHER CONFUSION COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED IF THE TEAM HAD SPECIFIED IN ADVANCE THAT THEIR SURVEY WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE POSSIBLE PROVISION OF AIM-9-L DATA TO THE ITALIANS. THAT IMPORTANT ELEMENT WAS NOT REVEALED UNTIL THE TEAM HAD ITS FIRST MEETING WITH MISSION PERSONNEL IN ROME.

8. IN OUR VIEW THE NDPC SURVEY REPORT DOES NOT ACCURATELY REPRESENT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY MISSION OFFICERS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO WAY OF GAUGING THE ACCURACY OF THE REPORT'S REPRESENTATION OF ITS MEETINGS WITH ITALIANS (AT MOST OF WHICH MEETINGS NO MISSION MEMBERS WERE PRESENT), WE BELIEVE THERE MAY BE MISUNDERSTANDING THERE AS WELL. NO MEMBER OF THE TEAM SPOKE ITALIAN, NONE HAD EXPERIENCE IN ITALY, NONE WAS CONVERSANT WITH ITALIAN POLITICAL HISTORY.

9. ALL OF WHICH IS NOT TO SAY THAT THIS MISSION HAS NO RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE ITALIAN METHOD OF PROVIDING SECURITY FOR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION. WE ARE CONCERNED AND WE ARE WATCHING IT CAREFULLY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE SITUATION HERE HAS DETERIORATED TO THE POINT THAT CONCERN MUST BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION. WE FEEL MOST
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STRONGLY THAT NO REPEAT NO CHANGE SHOULD BE MADE AT THIS TIME IN

THE LEVEL OF CLASSIFICATION OF MATERIAL WE PASS TO THIS
IMPORTANT ALLIED COUNTRY. BUT WE WOULD AGREE THAT NORMAL
PRUDENCE WOULD REQUIRE THAT IN SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OF SOME
SENSITIVITY SUCH AS THE AIM-9-L PROJECT, NEGOTIATIONS
WITH THE GOI SHOULD INCLUDE AN ACTIVE, ON-THE-SPOT REVIEW
OF SECURITY PROCEDURES IN CONSULTATION WITH ITALIAN AUTHORI-
TIES AND INDUSTRY TO ASSURE THAT THEY MEET OUR CRITERIA.
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Message Attributes

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TAGS: MILI, ESTC, AINF, AFSP, IT, NDPC
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